DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 251 956 EA 017 365

AUTHOR Kaplan, Michael H.
TITLE Past Successes and Future Challenges: An Examination of the Perceptions of Selected Community Education Opinion Leaders. Research Report 83-109.
INSTITUTION Virginia Univ., Charlottesville. Mid-Atlantic Center for Community Education.
SPONS AGENCY Mott (C.S.) Foundation, Flint, Mich.
PUB DATE Jul 83
NOTE 54p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Administrators; Community Attitudes; *Community Education; *Educational Trends; *Futures (of Society); Institutional Role; Models; National Surveys; Opinions; Organizational Communication; *Program Attitudes; *Program Effectiveness; Program Improvement; School Support; Trustees

ABSTRACT

The achievements, problems, and potential of community education (CE) were the subject of a 1983 survey that reveals the views of local and national leaders involved with CE. Based on an extensive literature review, a survey of seven open-ended questions was constructed. One hundred sixty-two respondents nationwide who are CE coordinators--directors, superintendents, principals, school board members, advisory council members, and "national opinion leaders"--provided information through telephone and in-person interviews. Following discussion of definitions and models of CE and of the survey's design and execution, the bulk of the paper reports respondents' opinions on these seven issues: (1) public awareness of CE, (2) professional educators' acceptance of CE, (3) links between CE and regular school programs, (4) reasons for CE's relative obscurity, (5) past successes of CE, (6) obstacles to future success, and (7) whether or not CE performs an essential role. The presentation consists primarily of anonymous quotes, grouped by category of respondent and interspersed with brief analytic paragraphs; successes and challenges identified are listed in tables. Conclusions on community education's status, achievements, and future--the last of which include several recommendations for strengthening CE--complete the report. (MCG)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED251956

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. E. Decker

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 017 365

PAST SUCCESSES AND FUTURE CHALLENGES:

An Examination of the Perceptions of Selected Community Education Opinion Leaders

Research Report 83-109

Michael H. Kaplan

Mid-Atlantic Center for Community Education

University of Virginia

Charlottesville, Virginia

This study was supported by a grant from the C. S. Mott Foundation to the Mid-Atlantic Community Education Center (M. H. Kaplan, Principal Investigator, Research & Evaluation Component). The interpretations and conclusions contained in this publication represent the views of the author and not necessarily those of the Mott Foundation, its trustees or officers.

July 1983

PREFACE

This is the last in a series of research and evaluation projects conducted by the Mid-Atlantic Center. Since 1978 I have had the opportunity to conduct, coordinate or assist in an exciting series of investigations. Curt Van Voorhees once wrote about the need for more CE research. That need has been partially addressed over the past ten years. Much more work remains. I sincerely wish that community educators will continue to conduct new research studies. More importantly, we need make sure the findings filter down to local practitioners.

I appreciate the cooperation of center directors and all other opinion leaders who took the time to respond to my interview schedule. As usual, the investigator reaps many benefits from an inquiry of this scope. There is optimism about the future as perceived by community educators. We must capitalize on this feeling.

Pat Roupe typed this report with her usual skill. I am grateful to her.

M. H. K.
Charlottesville
July 1983

EXPLANATORY NOTE

*This report contains numerous direct quotes from individuals interviewed during the data collection process. The investigator chose to weave these quotes throughout the study rather than paraphase the respondent. In many instances, the remarks are blunt, straightforward. In all cases, they represent each person's perception as he or she viewed it.

**In this report all references to community education appear as CE.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. FRAMEWORK FOR INQUIRY..... 1
A. Introduction..... 1
B. Background..... 2
C. Conclusion..... 12

II. DESIGN..... 13
A. Populations..... 13
B. Procedures..... 15
C. Interview Schedule..... 16

III. DISCUSSION OF DATA..... 18
A. Question 1: WHAT LEVEL OF AWARENESS DO YOU THINK EXISTS CURRENTLY REGARDING CE?..... 18

B. Question 2: DO YOU THINK THERE IS MUCH ACCEPTANCE OF CE AMONG SCHOOL PEOPLE (i.e. TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS)?..... 22

C. Question 3: ARE THERE SIGNIFICANT TIES BETWEEN CE AND THE GENERAL SCHOOL PROGRAM?..... 26

D. Question 4: WHY IS CE NOT A MORE OBSERVABLE PHENOMENON?..... 30

E. Question 5: WHAT DO YOU THINK THE MAJOR SUCCESSES OR BREAKTHROUGHS HAVE BEEN IN CE?..... 32

F. Question 6: WHAT ARE THE MAJOR HURDLES WHICH COMMUNITY EDUCATORS MUST CLEAR TO ENJOY FUTURE SUCCESSES?..... 37

G. Question 7: WOULD PEOPLE PURSUE CE ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNITIES IF NO FORMAL CE PROGRAM EXISTED?..... 40

IV. CONCLUSIONS..... 42
A. General Conclusions..... 42
B. Conclusions About Past CE Successes..... 43
C. Conclusions About Future CE Challenges..... 44
D. Summary..... 45

V. REFERENCES..... 47

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. A Nine Phase Approach to CE..... 5

Figure 2. CE Ingredients..... 6

Figure 3. CE Thrusts..... 6

Figure 4. CE Dimensions and Results..... 8

Figure 5. Community School Termination Profile..... 11

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Number of States Responding to Opinion Leader Survey... 14

Table 2. Interviews by Role Groups..... 16

Table 3. CE Successes Identified by CE Coordinators and Directors..... 33

Table 4. CE Successes Identified by School Superintendents..... 34

Table 5. CE Successes Identified by School Principals..... 34

Table 6. CE Successes Identified by School Board Members..... 35

Table 7. CE Successes Identified by Advisory Council Members.... 35

Table 8. CE Successes Identified by National Opionion Leaders... 36

Table 9. CE Challenges Identified by CE Coordinators and Directors..... 37

Table 10. CE Challenges Identified by School Superintendents..... 38

Table 11. CE Challenges Identified by School Principals..... 38

Table 12. CE Challenges Identified by School Board Members..... 39

Table 13. CE Challenges Identified by Advisory Council Members... 39

Table 14. CE Challenges Identified by National Opinion Leaders... 40

FRAMEWORK FOR INQUIRY

Introduction

Thus far the 1980's have witnessed a broad range of attacks upon the public education process. Industry is critical of the quality of today's high school graduates. Parents are critical of what teachers do (or do not do) in the classroom. Teachers are leaving their jobs in greater numbers. Many "burn out" while others become disillusioned with inadequate salaries, an absence of administrative support and an increase in negative media reporting. Administrators are unhappy with teachers and with school board members. Indeed, relationships among the key groups responsible for our public schools are best characterized as adversarial. One Midwestern superintendent noted:

> When my phone rings in the office, it's like Russian roulette. Which group is calling to complain? I get so few calls telling us that a good job is being done.

Several recent reports by national panels or blue ribbon commissions describe in detail the deterioration of quality in our high school graduates. There is growing concern over declining S.A.T. scores, especially in math. Many prospective job candidates cannot accurately fill out employment forms. In fact, many corporations report that new employees, including college graduates, are given intensive training in basic writing and communication skills before assuming regular job responsibilities.

The debate about how to correct this situation will no doubt continue. Schools have come under attack before. A retired school administrator recalled:

> It was not all that long ago that schools were attacked for not doing enough in vocational education. We spent millions and yet the criticism continues.

One of the fundamental tenets of the CE philosophy is that learning is a lifelong process. Hiemstra (1976) builds a strong case for the necessity of lifelong learning. There has been an explosion of educational programs for numerous age groups in numerous communities. Many are administered through adult education, recreation centers, community schools, day care organizations, department stores and special learning centers. In many locations CE has been at the center of this programmatic growth. It was reported that in 1982 17% of the school districts in America were operating CE programs. In Minnesota and elsewhere, closed school buildings are being converted to community and human services centers.

This study began to emerge while reflecting on the 17% statistic

mentioned above. It evolved also directly from an earlier study by the same investigator (Kaplan, 1982) and the work of Wear (1982) whose data on teacher perceptions of CE generated several tempting hypotheses. Finally, the present study concludes five years' of research and evaluation projects conducted or coordinated by the Mid-Atlantic Center for CE, University of Virginia. The research and evaluation effort had been a part of the Center's five year operating plan. It was the investigator's intent to share with fellow community educators some insights into where this concept is perceived to be and where it might be heading. The focus of the study is on opinion leaders' perceptions regarding past successes of and future challenges for CE.

Because of the existence of a national network of centers for CE development, it was not difficult to design a study which is national (U. S.) in scope. It was decided not to seek data from Canada or other countries actively involved in CE.

After reviewing several recent pieces of CE literature and conducting informal discussions with nine "opinion leaders" (defined by the investigator to be individuals who are listened to and respected by colleagues), it was decided that seven categories of opinion leaders would be interviewed for the study. Procedures for identifying the opinion leaders are presented in the DESIGN section. A primary objective of the study was to examine interview responses and to look for threads of similarity or divergence among the categories of opinion leaders. Despite the dangers of subjectivity in peoples' perceptions, the investigator felt that this reflective examination would provide an opportunity to assess CE successes and to plan for challenges which lie ahead.

Background

During the past fifteen years there has been a substantial amount of writing in the CE field. New articles appear regularly in the CE Journal. Position papers, unpublished documents, research reports and conference proceedings are disseminated from various CE centers. Doctoral studies also have added greatly to the existing CE literature and research base.

The conceptual framework for this study grew out of the existing CE literature, observed CE implementation and some unanswered questions which continue to be raised by community educators. Facilitated by the staffs of CE development centers, CE spread quickly between 1968 and 1983. Yet one of the challenges facing CE identified by opinion leaders in this study is best stated as follows: What is our mission and how shall we define it?

> NCEA has developed some new national agenda for CE. Our staff has no problem with the agenda. In fact we think it is too soft. It doesn't go far enough.

> I've watched CE get defined and re-defined. Along the way we have confused people. In our community we just wrote up our own definition which reflects how we operate and what we do--not any ideals we can't deliver or which are unacceptable.

Difficulty in stating a precise definition of CE is nothing new. Totten 91970) wrote:

> Community education cannot readily be defined in specific terms. It can be described and explained,...there is no authoritative definition. Community education is an all-inclusive phenomenon functioning in the community to help peopl. of all ages, races, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds to fulfill their learning needs and to aid in the development and improvement of the entire community (p. 3).

While Totten struggled with a CE definition, numerous other writers did not. The Board of directors of the National Community School Education Association (now National CE Association) captured the meaning of CE in the following statement (1968):

> Community School Education is a comprehensive and dynamic approach to public education. It is a philosophy that pervades all segments of education programming and directs the thrust of each of them towards the needs of the community. The community school serves as a catalytic agent by providing leadership to mobilize community resources to solve identified community problems. The marshalling of all forces in the community helps to bring about change as the school extends itself to all people.

Minzey and LeTarte's (1972) definition remains a classic because it is concise as well as comprehensive.

> Community Education is a philosophical concept which serves the entire community by providing for all of the ducational needs of all of its community members. It uses the local school to serve as the catalyst for bringing community resources to bear on community problems in an effort to develop a positive sense of community, improve community living, and develop the community process toward the end of self-actualization. (p. 19).

Decker (1972) emphasized the "eclectic philosphy" of CE by tracing its evolution in American history. He viewed it less as an innovation than as a broadened concept of education. Finally, Decker observed that it is difficult to define CE because implementation varies so diversely in each community. Nevertheless, writing later, Decker (1978) did offer this definition.

> Community education is a concept that stresses an expanded role for public education and provides a dynamic approach to individual and community improvement. Community education encourages the development of a comprehensive and coordinated delivery system for providing educational, recreational, social and cultural services for all people in a community. Although communities vary greatly with some being richer than others, all have tremendous human and physical resources that can be identified and mobilized to obtain workable solutions to problems. Inherent in the community education philosophy is the belief that each community education program should reflect the needs of its particular community. The philosophy advocates a process which produces essential modifications as times and problems change. (p. 4).

Clark (1977) had the following view of CE:

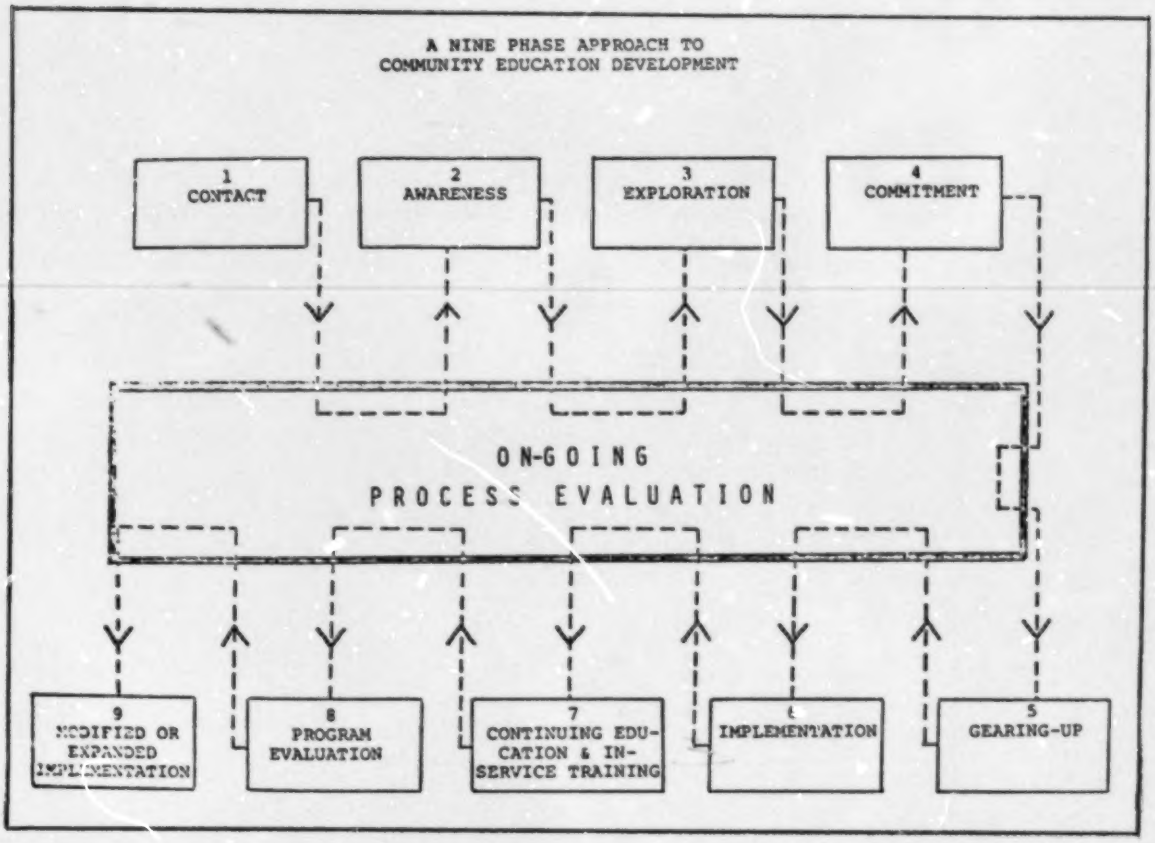
> The community education concept focuses primarily upon the community as the source and center of education, upon all its relevant sites, institutions, agencies, organizations and people. The school becomes essentially a place for cooperative planning of significant education experiences in the community and for their reporting and evaluation. (p. 5).

These definitions are representative of most of the CE literature. There continues to be a debate about whether CE should remain largely school-based in operation. For the purposes of this study, CE was viewed exclusively as school-based in its delivery. Furthermore, it became apparent that CE goes through a series of stages in its developmental process. In many communities--but certainly not in all--technical assistance from a CE development center was fundamental to the implementation of CE. Kaplan (1977) described a nine-phase approach which served as one method for helping develop a CE program. This approach (Figure 1) illustrates much of the developmental work of CE centers. Kaplan (1977) wrote:

> The Nine-Phase Approach is...meant to be guideline.... The phases represent a sequential framework;...it is important to

recognize that there are limitations with respect to time and staff that may make certain modifications necessary. (p. 45).

*Figure 1

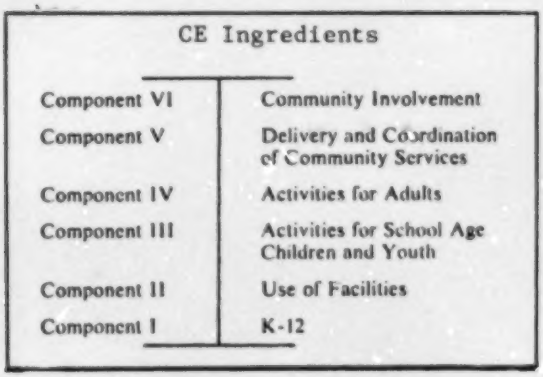


*Adapted from Burbach and Decker. (1977, p.49).

It is significant to emphasize that all CE centers did not necessarily use this exact approach. Nor did all communities develop their program in this fashion. Nevertheless, this approach does represent a somewhat typical developmental sequence for CE.

Three graphic models of the CE concept serve to characterize the generally agreed upon aspects of CE. Figure 2 contains Minzey and LeTarte's (1979) CE "ingredients." The ingredients move from a basic programming emphasis to more of a process orientation.

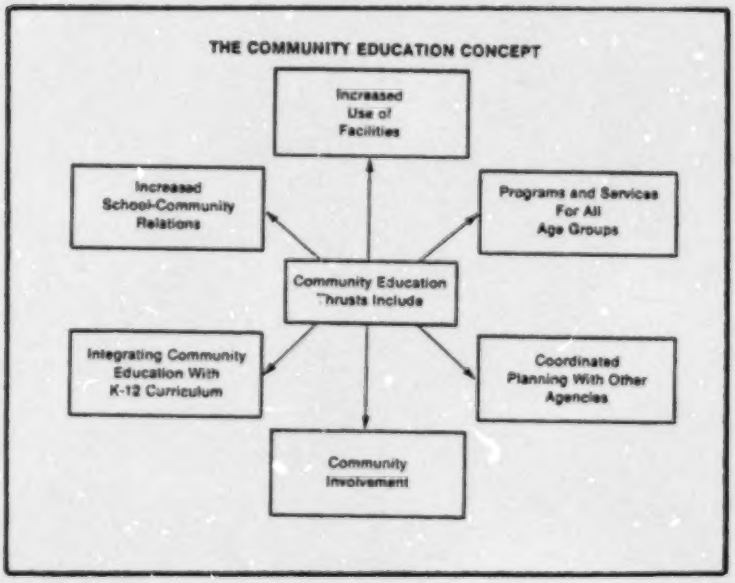
*Figure 2



* Adapted from Minzey and LeTarte (1979). (p.42)

Figure 3 illustrates six "thrusts" of the CE concept as described by Kaplan (1977). Figures 2 and 3 are similar in their emphasis except that Kaplan has not attempted to establish a priority or hierarchy in the six thrusts.

*Figure 3


THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION CONCEPT
Increased Use of Facilities
Increased School-Community Relations
Programs and Services For All Age Groups
Community Education Thrusts Include
Integrating Community Education With K-12 Curriculum
Coordinated Planning With Other Agencies
Community Involvement

*Adapted from Burbach and Decker (1977). (p. 41).

Decker (1978) developed a model which includes six "components" which are clearly sequential in their focus and development. The fundamental difference between Decker's and the previous two models lies in the top component--community organization and development. Many CE professionals agree that CE activities should enhance the lives of individuals and contribute to overall community improvement. But do they? And, to what extent? One CE coordinator noted:

> This program serves the needs of thousands every year. But I suspect that people take classes which become an end in themselves. How or where any broader transfer to community development occurs is not always observable.

Another coordinator went further:

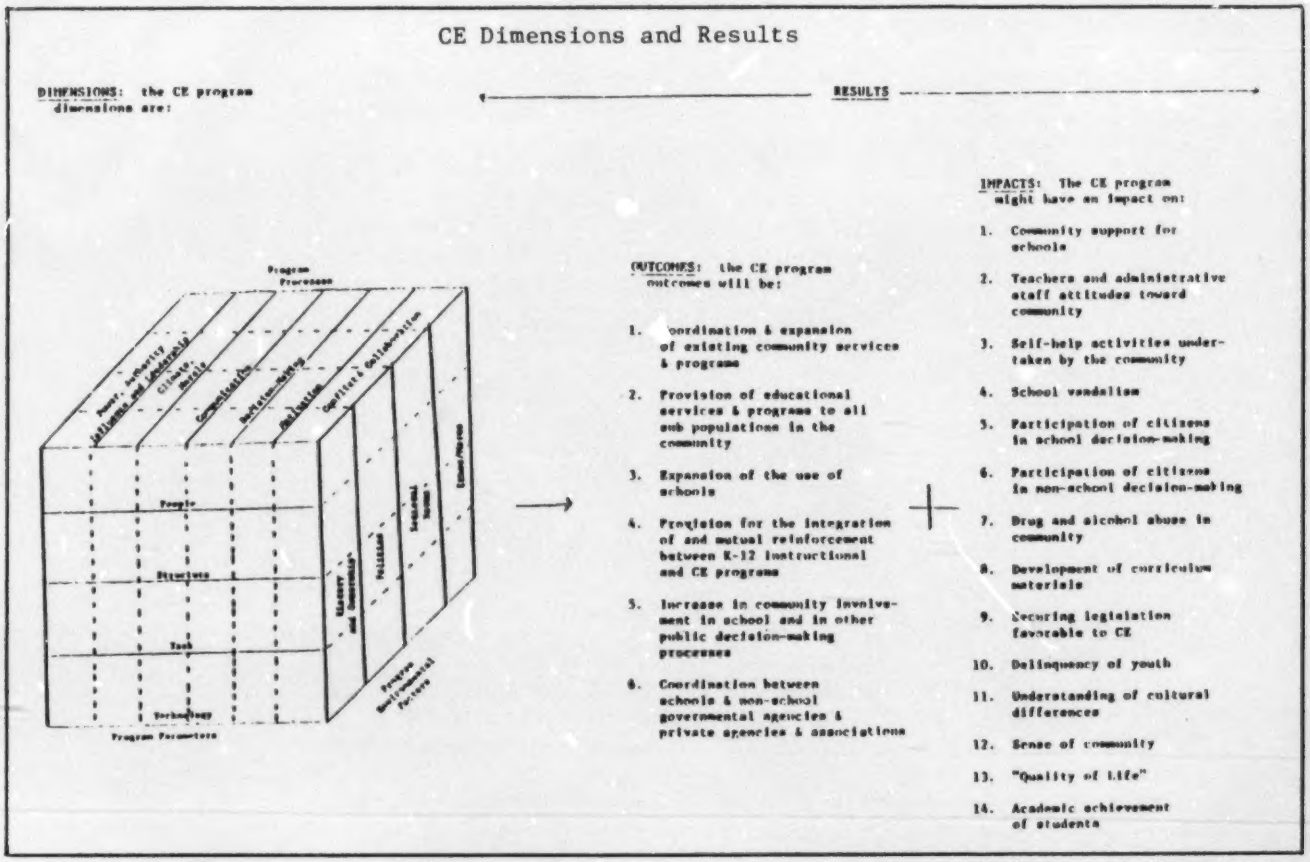
> The CE advisory council has helped work out goals which guide this program. We were influenced by a local government which basically said, "Keep out of the arena of community development." Plan and deliver services.

Indeed one of the most frequently identified challenges facing community educators is the need to agree upon a mission. Should this mission include any or all the thrusts, ingredients and components above? An answer is not given, simply. Yet there have been some recent attempts to re-conceptualize CE. Two were helpful to this investigation.

Schwartz and Kaplan (1981) presented a three dimensional CUBE which contains possible outcomes and impacts. Figure 4 illustrates the CUBE and its interactive elements. Like Figures 2 and 3 it does not emphasize community development as a possible outcome. Yet a glance at the list of impacts reveals several items which focus on societal developments in many communities.

* Figure 4

CE Dimensions and Results


DIMENSIONS: the CE program dimensions are:
RESULTS
Program Processes
Power, Authority Influence and Leadership
Climate, Morale
Communication
Decision-Making
Evaluation
Conflict Collaboration
People
Structure
Task
Technology
Program Parameters
Leisure and Community
Politics
Personal Values
Economics
Program Environmental Factors
OUTCOMES: the CE program outcomes will be:
1. Coordination & expansion of existing community services & programs
2. Provision of educational services & programs to all sub populations in the community
3. Expansion of the use of schools
4. Provision for the integration of and mutual reinforcement between K-12 instructional and CE programs
5. Increase in community involvement in school and in other public decision-making processes
6. Coordination between schools & non-school governmental agencies & private agencies & associations
IMPACTS: The CE program might have an impact on:
1. Community support for schools
2. Teachers and administrative staff attitudes toward community
3. Self-help activities undertaken by the community
4. School vandalism
5. Participation of citizens in school decision-making
6. Participation of citizens in non-school decision-making
7. Drug and alcohol abuse in community
8. Development of curriculum materials
9. Securing legislation favorable to CE
10. Delinquency of youth
11. Understanding of cultural differences
12. Sense of community
13. "Quality of Life"
14. Academic achievement of students

*Adapted from Schwartz and Kaplan (1981).

Warden (1982) analyzed the component approach to conceptualizing CE and stated:

> In this effort to explain community education from this reductionist perspective, community education theorists may be only offering a small glimpse of the true nature of the community education field. (p. 1).

Warden goes on to disucss various alternative visions of CE and to encourage community educators to expand their visions.

Even though CE definitions have varied over the years, Minzey (1974) once suggested that such variation does not represent anything unstable or threatening to the CE movement. He argued that elasticity is a strength of CE. The concept should bend toward new directions, with the ability to receive new input.

This study did not set out to reconceptualize CE. Instead, an attempt was made to assess perceived successes in CE's past and future challenges which community educators must face. Developing a framework for the inquiry was difficult because a transition between existing literature (and research) and practice had to be created. This transition was made easier by two recent studies which influenced the course of the present investigation. Wear (1982) reported on a research study which investigated "perceptions that teachers employed in community schools had regarding selected community education principles." She used an ethnographic interview process which generated data that were organized into ten domains. She stated:

> Of special interest was the domain of community education. Here the native language of the informants was grouped as one unit without any discernable pattern or sequence; these were simply descriptors of community education used by informants themselves. When the descriptors were internally analyzed, however, patterns began to emerge. Four primary characteristics of community education as perceived by teachers were evident: (1) community education made use of facilities; (2) it filled voids; (3) it improved the image of the school; and (4) it was education beyond the regular school day. Secondary descriptors, also using native languages, further clarified these four characteristics. The majority of perceptions were generally narrow in terms of community education's purpose and fell exclusively within the "program" aspect of the concept described by Minzey and LeTarte (1979). (pp. 16-17).

Wear sifted through the cultural data she had collected and suggested the following hypotheses:

> 1. There is a relationship between community school teachers' attitudes toward community education and its success.
>
> 2. There is a relationship between community school teachers' attitudes toward the community education director and community education's success.

3. K-12 teachers in systems with a community education program will display a lack of awareness of the K-12 curriculum component of community education.

4. Schools with a citizens advisory council will have better school-community relations than schools that do not.

5. Community school teachers will not integrate human or physical resources in or out of the classroom more than non-community school teachers do.

6. There is a positive relationship between teachers' conceptions of curriculum and the community's conceptions of curriculum.

7. Members of communities that have a high degree of participation in community education programs will express support for citizen participation in educational decision-making.

8. Members of communities that have a high degree of participation in community education programs will be supportive of teachers' efforts in school and curriculum matters.

9. Members of communities that have a high degree of participation in community education programs will perceive schools in a more positive way than members of communities that do not.

10. Members of communities that have a high degree of participation in community education programs will support the school financially through the passage of levies. (p.18).

Wear's hypotheses offer CE researchers an opportunity to investigate further the relationship of CE to the K-12 program in schools. The interview schedule for this investigation was structured, in part, to build off of Wear's (1982) research.

A final bit of help in shaping the framework for this inquiry resulted from a study (Kaplan 1982) conducted on community school terminations. A profile of terminated community schools was developed from intensive interview data. Figure 5 contains variables and critical factors associated with terminations of community schools.

*Figure 5

Community School Termination Profile

Variables	Critical Factors
1. Leadership	a. Properly trained CE coordinators b. Positive relations with principals and staff c. Presence of performance evaluation for CE coordinators d. Respect of school administrators and board e. flexibility in work hours
2. Training	a. Opportunities for staff development as well as professional renewal for all CE staff members b. presence of training for all untrained CE personnel c. funds to support training
3. Awareness of CE	a. supportive and knowledgeable power structure b. understanding principal and faculty c. central office and board awareness d. on-going awareness efforts for all groups and especially new actors.
4. Philosophical Impact	a. a commitment to pursue CE as a valid educational goal b. continuous reaffirmation of that commitment c. documentation of successes
5. Policy	a. presence of documented support for CE e.g. a resolution or statement b. guidelines in a policy manual c. CE relates to what the school system actively pursues.
6. Financial Support	a. adequate local funding b. self-supporting activities c. creativity in new fund generation.
7. Community Involvement	a. regular program participation b. attempts to reach several clienteles c. people in school buildings d. increased facility useage e. advocacy by community for CE concept
8. Agency Relationships	a. mutual supportive relationships with numerous community agencies
9. Program Dimensions	a. close ties to K-12 program b. serve appropriate clienteles but get to school children c. document impact of programs and services
10. Assessment	a. on-going program evaluation b. collect impact data c. performance evaluations d. make results known

*Adapted from Kaplan (1982).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Conclusion

A thorough analysis of the CE literature mentioned as well as selected informal discussions with CE opinion leaders led to the structuring of a seven (7) question interview schedule. It would have been easy to generate a much longer list. But this study was designed instead to look for some clues about past CE successes and future challenges. In an attempt to achieve this objective, the questions were constructed very broadly. In many instances, respondents were able to "free-wheel." In addition, the investigator was able to use secondary probes to insure that responses were clear and would cluster as categories of thought began to emerge.

CE is faced with many critical challenges. In addition, its professionals have many reasons to reflect positively on their accomplishments. How well and how long CE survives will be determined by community educator responses to future challenges. Moreover, addressing the most appropriate challenges will be vital. As one CE coordinator said:

> School people and school programs are getting axed here every year. We seem to survive and we grow. Part of our staying power is that we are doing the things they dump and we do them cheaper and just as well. We must continue to enhance our power base while not offending anyone.

This study was designed to ask the tough questions, the ones we tend to leave for others. What was discovered can be useful to community educators as we look back as well as ahead.

DESIGN

This study was designed to examine the perceptions of opinion leaders regarding past CE successes and challenges or hurdles which community educators will face in the future. Of special interest was the perceived relationship of CE to the K-12 structure. This relationship has been discussed extensively in the CE literature but there is very little available information on what form these relationships really take. In addition, because CE has become so inextricably tied to public schools, its very survival will relate to how the relationships continue to evolve. Has CE really resulted in educators developing a new conception of CE? Have the two become one as Clark (1971) suggested?

> Community Education can be a working model for education leaders, faculty and community members to use as a springboard for evaluating, restructuring, and making more relevant the regular school program. Ultimately, Community Education and what is now known as the "regular school" should be one and the same. We must reconstruct a new total educational process incorporating the best ideas of the "regular school" and Community Education.

At first, some thought was given to conducting intensive interviews with CE center directors and other key nationally known community educators. The assumption was that these individuals are opinion leaders. Furthermore, they have a fair grasp of CE development in their service regions or nationally.

After sharing this plan with several individuals, it became apparent that one man's opinion leader may not be someone else's. Furthermore, the investigator examined Wear's (1982) study and saw certain connections with the study on community school terminations (Kaplan, 1982).

Who really knows about CE? Studies by Schwartz et al. (1980) and Linden et al. (1981), which employed naturalistic inquiry techniques, reinforced the value of collecting on-site data, especially the contextual richness of interviews with practicing professional and involved community members.

Populations

It was decided to conduct interviews with categories of opinion leaders including:

1. CE coordinators or directors
2. Superintendents
3. Principals
4. School board members

5. Elected or appointed government officials
6. Advisory Council members
7. National Opinion leaders (center directors, retired national figures or other key individuals who do not fit the other six categories)

Preliminary phone conversations with four center directors indicated that the best method for identifying the opinion leaders would be on a state-by-state basis, with the help of center directors in each state. A request and survey were mailed to every center for CE development, using Mott Foundation listings. Follow-up requests to non-respondents were made thirty days after the initial requests. No additional attempts were made to contact centers which had not responded. Table 1 contains a listing of states and the number of centers which responded.

Table 1

Number of states responding to Opinion Leader Survey

State	Centers
Alabama	2
Alaska	1
Arizona	1
Arkansas	1
California	2
Colorado	2
Delaware	1
Florida	1
Georgia	1
Illinois	1
Indiana	2
Kansas	1
Maine	1
Maryland	1
Michigan	3
Minnesota	1
Mississippi	1
Montana	2
Nebraska	1
New Hampshire	1
New Jersey	2
New Mexico	2
North Carolina	2
North Dakota	1
Ohio	1
Oklahoma	1
Oregon	1
Pennsylvania	1
South Carolina	2
Tennessee	1
Texas	1
Utah	3
Virginia	1
Washington	1
Wisconsin	1
Wyoming	2
Total 36	Total 50

Respondents were asked to identify two individuals in each of the seven opion leader categories. Not every respondent provided the names of two people per category. Nor did they provide in every case the address and phone number for each opinion leader. On the fifty (50) surveys received, 562 opinion leaders in all categories were identified. Some individuals were identified two or more times by center directors in various states. This was especially the case with the national opinion leader category. In addition, in instances where more than one survey was received from a particular state, opinion leaders in several categories surfaced more than once. The lists were combed for duplications and eventually contained 486 opinion leaders in seven categories. Individual lists of opinion leaders were typed by category.

Procedures

Data collection was conducted in an attempt to determine what the past successes and future challengs of CE were perceived to be. Secondary considerations focused on the relationships between CE and the K-12 educational component, existing awareness of CE, the extent to which people would pursue CE where it did not formally exist and speculation regarding why there are not more CE programs in existence.

The nature of this inquiry raises questions about objectivity, subjectivity and generalizability. Perceptual data gathered through interviews are difficult to analyze. The investigator had to make certain that each respondent understood the questions. In a few instances a certain question had to be rephrased or clarified. It was evident that after each group began responding to the interview schedule patterns and key words emerged from their responses.

One final adjustment was made to the target populations. After several futile attempts to reach elected government officials including governors, state legislators and local officials, the category was dropped from the study which reduced the target population to 422.

All data in this study were collected by using interviews. Rogers (1976) suggested that it is possible to collect quality data (comparable to that in person) by telephone. Willower and Fraser (1980) found that by conducting telephone interviews rapport with respondents was neither reduced nor inhibited. In fact, they suggested that a phone interview provides an element of privacy which can lead to fuller responses. Telephone interviews ran 10-15 minutes.

In addition to telephone interviews, the invesitgator was able to conduct in-person interviews with opinion leaders at conferences, conventions and at on-site visitations. Interviews in person tended to run longer, 30-45 minutes. Brady (1977) stated that longer interviews produced "greater" research. Sheets with the seven interview questions were used to take handwritten notes during the interviews.

Table contains a breakdown by role group of the opinion leaders interviewed. One hundred sixty-two (162) individuals were interviewed. An effort was made to contact the individuals mentioned most often as opinion leaders. There were several nationally known persons who were not identified by center directors as opinion leaders. Initially, the investigator planned to add individuals be perceived to be conspicious by their absence. Instead, several of these individuals agreed to react to early plans for this inquiry and consequently, were not among those formally interviewed.

It was not possible to contact all 422 opinion leaders. After contacting the most frequently mentioned person in each category, the investigator arbitrarily selected other respondents from each of the six remaining lists. The data discussed in the next section include responses from throughout the major geographical regions of the United States except for Hawaii.

Table 2

Role Group	Number
National Opinion Leaders	34
Principals	26
Superintendents	19
Advisory Council Members	20
School Board Members	22
CE Coordinators or Directors	41
Total	162

Interview Schedule

The interview schedule for this study includes the following seven questions.

1. What level of awareness do you think exists currently regarding community education?

2. Do you think there is much acceptance of community education among professional school people (i.e. teachers and principals)?

3. Are there significant ties between community education and the general school program?

4. Why isn't community education a more observable phenomenon?

5. What do you think the major successes or breakthroughs have been in community education?

6. What are the major hurdles which community educators must clear to enjoy future successes?

7. Would people pursue community education activities in communities if no formal community education program existed?

Only two individuals declined to be interviewed. All respondents were guaranteed anonymity. Interviewes responses, when used, were identified only as to the person's role. This procedure had been used successfully in the investigator's study of community school terminations (Kaplan, 1982).

Several interviews went far beyond the scope of the study. Respondents were eager to discuss both successes and challenges. A surprising amount of candor characterizes the range of responses which appear in the section on FINDINGS.

DISCUSSION OF DATA

Ths section was organized by presenting each of the seven questions from the interview schedule accompanied by a discussion of responses from selected opinion leaders in each of the six categories. It was difficult to limit the length of this section. The only responses included were those which displayed an element of convergence of perceptions. tions. This convergence is emphasized further in the CONCLUSIONS section.

Anonymity for the respondents was promised. Individual respondents were referred to according to their particular role. For example, a CE coordinator stated, "....", or an advisory council member reported, "...." Several responses were hard-hitting. But the sort of frankness expressed by respondents was very illuminating.

This discussion included references back to key parts of the conceptual framework for the study. Certain observations made by this investigator have been confirmed or supported by other recent studies. Hopefully, these findings will make it possible to set CE goals for the future.

1. WHAT LEVEL OF AWARENESS DO YOU THINK EXISTS CURRENTLY REGARDING CE?

The responses to all seven interview questions in this study tended to reflect either a national or local perception. National opinion leaders, especially center directors seemed to have more knowledge about CE development around the country. Yet some center directors were very regional in their feelings:

> Some people in this position have spent a lot of time trying to become national figures. I think that is O.K., but I personally have put the bulk of my time into building a solid network within our own state. That's where the payoff is.
>
> If the Mott thing caves in, CE will survive in this state because we put the time in up front. Our goal has been to try and make people aware of CE and to keep the term before them. It's tough to get to all the key groups.
>
> I am worried about CE because of the anti-education bias around these days. It varies state by state. We are making headway; but we have a long way to go.

More specifically about CE awareness, center directors were very consistent:

Many people have no idea. The label doesn't mean anything specific. It includes adult education, extended use of the facilities and after school services.

After all these years it still looks like community school stuff.

We try to emphasize lifelong learning, citizen participation, effective use of resources and networking between agencies. But people taking programs tend to see CE as just that--an opportunity to take a class.

I think awareness of CE exists at different levels depending on the group. Some council members know more about process. Some don't care.

There is not a thorough conceptual understanding of CE. People are aware of whether or not they are getting any services.

Some other responses from national opinions leaders who were not center directors included:

In general, there is a low level of CE awareness. People take programs but don't know much about process. I wonder if process is something we ourselves have created.

Public awareness of CE is critical. CE is the best kept secret in this country.

The term CE is very confusing. Is it programs or philosophy?

CE coordinators and directors responded in the following ways:

Our community knows what we do and offer. There is about 75-80% awareness of this CE program's activity by people in the service territory.

In this city poeple know about the CE program. They really don't know about the CE concept.

There is very high visibility for CE because of our booklet. People look for the booklet. They don't view CE as a process for solving community problems.

Principals responded very similarly. It did not appear to make much difference if the principal was elementary or secondary.

> I really think people in this area know that we have a CE program.

> The awareness centers on people who sign up for classes. My secretary finally convinced me that another phone line was necessary. People call when they know you deliver.

> I took a college CE class in my doctoral program. We spent time on the CE concept. But I feel people are more aware of what CE delivers--not what its conceptual framework might be.

Three superintendents made the following observations:

> I use lifelong learning as a new frame of reference because it lends credibility to CE. People in our town know that services are provided.

> Our board needs more awareness. Every board member has turned over since I've been superintendent.

> Awareness of the need for CE is what we don't have. My board tries to cut it every year. But CE has been picking up programs for us that now support themselves. If we shut CE down, we lose all the way around.

Advisory council members had some interesting insights. The CE process emphasizes people involved in making key decisions in the community. Yet this involvement tends to focus on what one CE director referred to as "soft-core involvement." She stated:

> Councils get geared up. I show them a film and we talk about the major problems in this community. But then we always come back to the necessity to publish our borchure of programs.

Some council member responses echoed this problem:

> Our role is not very clear. I like helping to get programs to people. But we usually don't make important decisions. I'm not sure we should.

Thank goodness it's not power I'm after. This council is like a lot of committees who volunteer. One thing we do on awareness is take our message to other groups.

Philosophy doesn't sell well these days. Folks are looking for delivery. Our program is successful because we do deliver.

School board members throughout this study made their contrast with advisory council members abundantly obvious. A school board has legal sanctions which councils most often do not. Boards also must deal with a range of decision-making in schools. They must look at programs, personnel, philosophy and finances. So much of what they do is influenced by state and federal laws. One board member stated:

I'm glad they haven't said we have to do CE. At least here in this state we can choose to do it freely.

Other board members addressed the awareness question as follows:

Parents call me all the time about this teacher or that school. Their concerns are focused exclusively on students--usually their own! I don't get many calls about CE except at budget time.

We are updated regularly about CE. They do a wonderful job publicizing the program. Participation increases every year. Conceptually, I don't think most people know much about CE.

From the beginning--9 years ago--CE was designed to open our schools and serve as many people as we could with a broad range of programs. We still believe that.

My files are full of letters from residents. They appreciate our schools being opened.

At the community level, CE is perceived to be consistent with the basic components of using school facilities, providing services and programs for all ages and emphasizing lifelong learning. Many respondents referred to citizen participation in CE but there was a tendancy to hedge on the involvement of people in community problem solving. As one CE coordinator put it:

We run one of the best programs anywhere. If a problem does come up, we can work on it or refer it to a more appropriate agency.

There appeared to be very little awareness of a connection between CE and the K-12 instructional program. More on this connection will be included in an analysis of responses to Question 3. But one principal noted:

> Our CE coordinator helps with school volunteers. But I know that teachers don't feel that's a CE function, even though they very much appreciate the volunteer efforts.

Nationally, the prevailing perception is that there is a low overall level of CE awareness. Some growth has been observed recently, however. An NCEA officer was optimistic:

> Our ties to key groups are increasing. Other educational groups are learning about us.

Another national opinion leader was less encouraging.

> I hope I'm wrong but I feel we are losing momentum. The loss of federal funds was a real blow. Mott is kicking in less. At the local level we fight the budget battle longer and harder every year.

Awareness of CE as a program of services and activities is firmly entrenched. There is much evidence to suggest that a low level of CE process awareness exists. In fact many CE coordinators do not concern themselves at all with philosophical, conceptual or process-oriented issues. Instead the focus is operational and programmatic. It should be emphasized, however, that CE process is not totally disregarded, across the board. In fact in "mature" CE programs, coordinators felt it was possible to take new approaches to solving community problems because residents had become aware of the regular delivery of CE service.

2. <u>DO YOU THINK THERE IS MUCH ACCEPTANCE OF CE AMONG PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL PEOPLE (i.e. TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS)?</u>

This question was included in an attempt to get more insight into the CE/K-12 situation. There is uneasiness in educational settings. How community educators are viewed and how the CE concept is accepted is central to where this field is moving.

State laws are much more clear on K-12 issues than or CE--at least in most states. It was noted earlier that CE remains a largely public school based enterprise. Consequently, school people's acceptance of CE seemed pertinent to this inquiry.

What became obvious was the perception that CE is, in many places, accepted, operationally. That is, school people recognize that it goes on and seem to accept that. Also clear was the perception that, on balance, there is not much real acceptance of CE as a philosophy. One former center director views the problem this way:

> Our society still says, basically, that a person has one accepted way of getting educated. You go K-12. That's where the bucks are for support. Lawmakers do everything to reinforce this belief. For CE to be totally accepted, educators and lawmakers must give credence to lifelong learning and unconventional methods of the teaching/learning process. They have to also back it with money.

CE coordinator responses to the second question included:

> There is a grudging acceptance. Tight money creates tension.

> Acceptance varies according to how strong the program is at each building.

> We have good acceptance. Our school district has converted two buildings to self-supporting CE centers.

> Our superintendent sets a supportive tone. As a result acceptance has increased.

Some coordinators were not as fortunate:

> If the program lasted 100 years, they would still fight us.

> School people only see a narrow range of instructional responsibilities.

> They will continue to tolerate us but as for acceptance of us as professionals, with a mission, I have my doubts.

Superintendents had mixed reactions.

> It's hard for school people to see the real potential of CE. Teachers and principals tend to be conservative in their attitudes about schools.

I have watched my own position on CE change. In our district we were able to save some purely school-oriented services by having CE take them over. This process has led to more acceptance by the educational staff and the board.

CE is a sleeper. It will take a long time for the concept to be accepted—it may never be. But when administered effectively, CE has a special flexibility that we are only now discovering.

Principals' responses were an interesting contrast to superintendents.

Many of us accept CE here because we can't make it go away.

This building is getting old before its time. I cannot accept what goes on here after 4 p.m.

Some principals, too, had undergone changes in what they believed.

I am hung up on accepting CE as a philosophy (which I cannot--totally) and appreciating what our coordinator has been able to do in this building.

People in this area really identify with this middle school. For years the missing link was with the community. Everyone was busy teaching. Now we communicate through the CE office. Teachers accept this.

I've grown to accept the tremendous use of this facility. People should have access. I still think the advisory council is a waste.

Advisory council members' perceptions of CE acceptance by school people points to the need for continuing awareness.

It seems like all they care about is a pay raise and eliminating CE.

School people will accept only those ideas which someone says they must.

I think we have been accepted as far as getting doors open and projects and services organized.

School people don't know what this concept is really about. New staff get no orientation unless a CE coordinator provides it.

School board members responses included:

This board has been very accepting of CE--more so than have teachers and some principals. Thanks to us there is a CE program here.

I predict that CE will gain acceptance. We have been able to truly address some organizational problem creatively because of CE. The experiment will continue.

What has been accepted is the need for the schools to provide as much as possible for this community. I see it largely as service in nature.

National opinion leader responses reflected different thinking. Center directors stated:

There is a survival acceptance of CE. Community educators operate as social entrepeneurs. As teaching continues to decline, the innovators, the CE people, will survive and be more accepted.

Labels complicate acceptance. What we do seems to be accepted. But not as CE. In addition, different agencies are using our term.

In our state there is significant acceptance because we have existing legislation and super coordinators.

Other non center director national opinion leaders shared their views.

We are getting more acceptance all the time. Coordinators must use more outreach. Superintendents are looking more for a community person.

I think there is more acceptance among administrative types and less with teachers. It relates to where people are in the decision-making chart.

Acceptance of CE by school people varies according to many factors. Kaplan (1982) found that CE coordinators who had established links with the educational staff were more accepted themselves. Respondents answering Question 2 seem to be signaling a shift to more acceptance of CE because it provides school people the opportunity to look freshly at solving school problems--not necessarily community problems. One superintendent expressed his relief:

> Just before you came our board voted to let the CE Department take over summer school, driver education and the whole communication operation. I know we'll save money, programs and face.

It is too soon to know how widespread this practice will become. But accepting CE as a school problem-solving strategy is certainly an exciting if not ironic twist.

3. ARE THERE SIGNIFICANT TIES BETWEEN CE AND THE GENERAL SCHOOL PROGRAM?

Just what relationships exist between CE and the school's overall instructional program were examined in this investigation. Do these ties really exist or are they the creation of writers in the CE field?

The groups most likely to have insights into this relationship were assumed to be building level people, particularly CE coordinators and principals. Coordinator and director responses included:

> Relationships with K-12 in my school district are integral. It wasn't always this way. As director of community services I report directly to the superintendent and together we map out strategies.

> We have some ties. Our coordinators plan field trips and bring in outside people. They also help with advisory committees which are mandatory by state law.

> Ties are very much present. We do day care, the alternative kindergarten and evening high school credit classes.

> Our staff is responsible for the volunteer program, pre-school programs, family education, and communications between parents and educators. I believe that slowly teachers are recognizing both our contributions and our potential.

> I see coordinators becoming adjunct facilitators. We do scheduling, curriculum enrichment and summer school.

These responses tend to typify a range of administrative responsibilities which community educators are assuming at both building and district levels. Other new responsibilities in some locations include: driver education, recreation and athletics coordination, health care referral, grants writing, alternative schools and a host of other projects, services or programs.

Some of their efforts are seen as central to a school system's ability to offer a quality range of services to K-12 youngsters while others are seen as dispensable.

Principals' comments shed some light on this issue.

> CE is now doing some things we cut out of our budget. Politically they are wise to get involved. It also makes the school district look good.

> As far as any significant ties are concerned, they don't exist here! Our CE lady does help with volunteers but the real pressure is on teachers to make sure the volunteer is involved appropriately.

> Principals are accused of being public enemy #1 for CE. But my job is to make sure this elementary school runs smoothly The coordinator makes a number of contributions but I would terminate him in favor of a teacher--without hesitation.

One high school principal echoed the feelings of several others regarding key ties.

> Something funny is happening here. Our board cuts the school budget every year by looking for ways to allow CE to handle some marginal programs. The summer school, driver ed, and drug abuse programs are all examples. The fact that CE does it cheaper and more efficiently makes it possible to maintain these programs. To me, those are vital ties because these programs are valuable.

School superintendents are very concerned about the image of their schools. They worry that the public is not getting the best information. Some of these administrators talked openly about ties to the K-12 structure

but did not limit those ties to matters of pure instruction.

> Historically, schools have done a lousy job of communicating with the public. Our CE director is now handling all our public relations work.

> Because of the citizen participation aspect of CE and our state laws on councils at all buildings, we require our CE staff to get training and to facilitate those councils.

> School people by nature are not very trusting. We have been building ties slowly between CE and our whole school operation. They will probably take over!

> I do not feel that the ties should be purely instructional. CE is flexible and their staff is free to do things teachers can't. A sensible tie is one which allows a coordinator to help teachers, not replace them or what they do.

> CE should concern itself strictly with supplementing K-12 with adult services. Those contacts would give us a real public boost.

Advisory council members were sensitive to general concerns of local school administrators. Probably because of their loyalties to CE and to individual coordinators, some council members responded impatiently to the question about ties between CE and K-12.

> As a former P.T.A. member that organization contributed nothing to good relationships. Projects wre token in nature. CE has tied itself very closely to the elementary schools.

> Beginning with parent education projects we have witnessed contributions to the school curriculum that will have a lasting impact.

> Our schools are probably like most others. We have buildings where principals and teachers welcome CE and let it work for them. We also have buildings where this simply never occurs.

Several school board members commented on how much of their time is spent on budgetary matters. One woman summarized their anxieties:

> Some groups call and tell us to increase the budget while others threaten us if we do recommend increases.

There was recognition of CE contributions by several board members. Regarding the question of ties, the prevailing response focused on the newly acquired administrative responsibilties which CE has been given in a number of school districts.

> The way we now handle drive education saves us $10,000.

> Our position as a board is that CE should do things nobody else can do, given existing resources. Whether or not that ties directly into the instructional processs does not matter.

Responses from national opinion leaders reflect two basic directions. First there was a group which felt that, generally, there were no significant ties between CE and K-12.

> History speaks against it. We have sold CE as an after school program and that's what people think it should be.

> CE has been sold as self-supporting. Therefore, nobody feels ownership. It must be sold as an integral part of a school system.

> CE is an add-on. It always has been.

A second group had quite another view.

> Councils in our state are mandated. Coordinators work right with teachers and principals. We also work on homework assistance, curriculum enrichment and basic literacy requirements. The ties are there and growing.

> Such efforts as intergenerational programs and community outreach represent important ties.

It was evident that nearly every significant tie between CE and K-12 was in some fashion programmatic, usually operational. Clark's (1971) definition of CE and its potential to impact education has not

come very far. Moreover, teachers, particularly, still tend as Wear (1982) noted to view CE as an adult-directed service.

The most important trend which emerged from this question points to the future. Superintendents and school board members are struggling to preserve their educational enterprises. They have discovered that the CE director can function successfully as an entrepreneur. They also recognize the public relations potential of CE and are eager to exploit that potential. Wear (1982) noted something similar in her study.

> Community education was perceived as improving the image of the school. Three fourths of the informants referred to the public relations function of community education. Some of the ways that community eudcation was viewed as improving the school's image were "making use of facilities, (thereby) putting the school in the center of the community," and "giving the community back something for its tax money." One informant stated, "Parents like to know our buildings are not empty...(that) our doors are open." Four informants hypothesized that community education "gets adults into the schools and more concerned about schools, they are more willing to fork over money." (p. 17)

4. WHY IS CE NOT A MORE OBSERVABLE PHENOMENON?

This question was included to try and get opinion leaders to open up regarding CE development. Much has been written about all the good things CE promises when implemented. It raises a curious question: Why doesn't every community have a CE program? Question 4 also provided a transition to Questions 5 and 6, especially 6, which deals with challenges community educators must face in the future.

In a study on community school terminations (Kaplan, 1982) it was observed that financial support was not as critical a factor in terminations as were significant links to K-12, leadership and political action. In this study, as well, lack of financial support, while mentioned by some respondents, was not the critical factor impinging upon CE growth. Without the funds, there can be no program. But other variables do intervene and set the stage for CE expansion. According to CE coordinators and directors:

> There is actually more CE. People don't always call it by that name.
>
> We don't market the concept very well. This could be done by hooking more closely into NSPRA.

Community educators spend too much time running classes. They lack the necessary vision.

Better strategies are needed to impact the system. We can work to unite communities for excellence in education which will raise our credibility.

There is no profession as such for CE professionals. NCEA is a joke, a club for people with Mott travel money. The NCEA program is the same, always. I haven't belonged for 6 years.

Many places have tried CE and failed because they put a weak person in the leadership position.

In lots of towns CE is done by different agencies. So, they really have it but don't call it CE.

Many school systems still view CE as an adjunct effort. To last and spread it must be a priority of the superintendent. He can sell the board and the staff.

National opinion leaders offered the following remarks which tended to be critical of schools and educators. CE coordinators and directors were more willing to look at themselves and to talk about using their positions as launching points. They were more realistic, on balance, than the national opinion leaders, particularly center directors.

Public schools are a monopoly. They tend to be slow to respond to change and pressure.

Schools have to be beaten into change by such forces as the state legislature.

Some communities do not need CE. It is really only a managerial technique devised for urban schools.

CE is a foreign philosophy. School people will never understand it or accept it.

> Principals are the greatest barrier to any change in schools.

School people's (superintendents, principals and board members) responses clustered in the following themes. A board member said:

> We are under pressure to watch spending on new programs. But more importantly, everybody wants us to back the instructional component of our schools.

One superintendent was optimistic:

> I expect more CE because schools will have to reach out more in the future. Schools have been too detached and CE folks can help create the outreach.

Comments from two principals point to the problems of using statistics.

> The CE center in our area mails out a newsletter. I noticed a % figure of existing community schools. The problem lies in the criteria used to count CE operations.

> My career has taken me to seven schools in four states over 25 years. Every school I worked in had two or more elements of CE. My present school has a CE coordinator which makes it possible to do much more. But CE has been around for a long time.

Perhaps we have been hung up on counting members of community schools as well as numbers of CE activities. These numbers certainly serve a useful purpose. But as one advisory council member put it:

> We asked the coordinator not to read program totals to us at our meetings. Instead, we tried to get people to come in and tell us how they feel about our CE efforts. I always thought it was impact on people that made CE worthwhile.

5. <u>WHAT DO YOU THINK THE MAJOR SUCCESSES OR BREAKTHROUGHS HAVE BEEN IN CE?</u>

This question was structured so respondents could address the

question in any of several ways: locally, nationally, professionally, operationally or programmatically. Responses have been summarized and appear in Tables 3 - 8.

Table 3 contains perceived successes mentioned by CE coordinators. The investigator combined similar successes but listed all which were mentioned at least once.

Table 3

CE Successess Identified by
CE Coordinators and Directors

* Much more awareness at state legislative levels.
* More awareness of CE by major organizations such as NSPRA, NACO, NSBA, NEA.
* More closeness with recreators than a few years ago.
* School administrators are beginning to use our jargon to improve public confidence.
* An interface has emerged between CE and other educational groups which aids understanding of CE.
* CE is a conduit of understanding from school to community.
* School facilities are open.
* CE can be a vehicle for expressing human needs.
* Principals are working more closely with us.
* Awareness of our program has spread.
* We generate revenue.
* CE has coordinated and administered effectively.
* Training is available for new CE staff members.
* It is possible to get citizens to participate.
* Human needs have been met.
* More CE programs have started.
* Multi-age programs can work at any school.

Superintendents identified CE successes illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4

CE Successes Identified by School Superintendents

* Trained people have been available (coordinators).
* Outreach has been enhanced by CE.
* Regular school programs have been saved by CE.
* School Advisory committees have been run successfully by CE.
* Public relations is a natural for CE.
* Emphasis on lifelong learning will be a CE success and will help save schools.
* School facilities are open and available.
* Programs and services are offered to an assortment of age groups.
* CE has strengthened links between school and community.
* CE has made it possible for a school system to look creatively at school problems.

School principals mentioned the CE successes contained in Table 5.

Table 5

CE Successes Identified by School Principals

* Home-school relations have been well-managed by CE.
* Facilities are used often.
* A great number of programs are available to everyone in the community.
* The CE coordinator makes CE successful.
* Outreach to patrons is better.
* Training is available when needed.
* Volunteer coordination works well.
* Public relations have improved.
* CE has supplemented teachers' basic jobs.
* Advisory committees work better.

School board members identified CE successes shown in Table 6.

Table 6

CE Successes Identified by
School Board Members

* CE has taken responsibility for programs we had to eliminate.
* CE coordinators have become valuable professional staff specialists.
* Outreach has improved.
* Public relations are better.
* Citizens are better informed.
* Council involvement is much higher and of a better quality.
* Recognition of CE around the state improves our overall image.
* Training opportunities have been abundant.
* CE gives us flexibility.
* Getting our schools open for public use.
* Running a large number of CE programs.

Advisory Council members mentioned the CE successes in Table 7.

Table 7

CE Successes Identified by
Advisory Council Members

* Having dedicated, trained CE coordinators.
* Making an impact on local school people.
* Being able to use school buildings regularly.
* Assessing needs and planning a variety of programs and services.
* School people have become more aware of adult learning needs.
* CE conferences.
* People do identify more with a community school.

The national opinion leaders group contained many center directors. Their orientation to CE was somewhat different than individuals involved at the local level. There were, however, some similarly identified successes. Table 8 contains the CE successes noted by the national opinion leaders.

Table 8

CE Successes Identified by
National Opinion Leaders

* CE remains in the vanguard of educational change.
* People attracted to CE are creative and they share.
* The development of a national network of CE centers.
* There is a lot of cooperation between schools and other human service agencies.
* The CE films: "A Sense of Community" and "To Touch a Child."
* The old National Center training program.
* The Community Education Journal.
* Many state departments of education are now involved with CE.
* The five year plans submitted to Mott.
* Old people dropped out and new ones have come into CE.
* University base was an innovative idea.
* The CE movement continues to be alive and debated.
* Evolution of CE literature and research.
* More community schools have opened.
* Good students and professional coordinators.
* Commitment to community involvement.
* Grassroots leadership training.
* CE was exported all over the country and the world.

Tables 3 - 8 contain opinion leaders' perceptions of past CE successes. Further discussion of these successes will occur in the CONCLUSIONS section.

6. WHAT ARE THE MAJOR HURDLES WHICH COMMUNITY EDUCATION MUST CLEAR TO ENJOY FUTURE SUCCESSES?

This question generated a host of responses. Respondents were candid, reflective and not at all afraid to discuss the future, particularly with respect to problems they know need to be faced. Tables 9 - 14 contain the challenges identified by six groups of CE opinion leaders.

Table 9 contains challenges identified by CE coordinators and directors.

Table 9

CE Challenges Identified by CE Coordinators and Directors

* Back to basics means CE has to work with K-12.
* Much more work with teachers and administrators will be necessary.
* We must become a vital part of educating kids.
* Declining enrollments will lead to declining resources.
* We have to come to agreement on our mission.
* Increased dialogue with other organizations is needed.
* A place in the school's organization should be found.
* A professional organization for CE professionals is desperately needed. NCEA does not meet these needs.
* Our challenge is to remain open and flexible.
* Better input from community residents is needed.
* CE training for all new educators.
* Getting along with multiple constituencies.
* Less focus on community improvement and more on services delivered.
* Generating more state funding.
* Learning how to mobilize, politically.
* Become cost-effective.
* Be able to document CE's impact.

Table 10 contains the challenges mentioned by school superintendents.

Table 10

CE Challenges Identified by
School Superintendents

* Being able to do more with less.
* Accept adversity and uncertainty.
* Upgrade new skills.
* Generate fresh revenue sources.
* Gain confidence of professional educators.
* Help restore school confidence.
* Continue to meet newly emerging needs of school-age kids.
* Improve public relations capability.
* Keep facilities open and clean.
* Narrow the conceptual focus of CE.
* Make CE unique because of its delivery capability.
* Promote lifelong learning.
* Lobby policy-makers and governments for support.
* Build coalitions with educational groups like AASA.

Principals mentioned the challenges which appear in Table 11.

Table 11

CE Challenges Identified by
School Principals

* Help make advisory councils work.
* See to it that CE is able to be appreciated by teachers.
* Use CE to enhance public relations and communications networks.
* CE can continue to help administer programs the board drops.
* Share more of the CE revenue on building improvements.
* Assist the principal with schedules and other administrative functions.
* Learn to help citizens focus their involvement.
* Figure out ways to get more volunteer in the building.

School board members suggested the challenges listed in Table 12.

Table 12

CE Challenges Identified by School Board Members

* CE has been creative and flexible--keep it that way!
* Help the administration generate money.
* Try and get more CE training for teachers.
* Work with central office to preserve the quality of the school program.
* Keep on building the scope of CE services.
* The buildings must stay open.
* Increase public relations efforts.

CE advisory council members suggested several challenges which listed in Table 13.

Table 13

CE Challenges Identified by Advisory Council Members

* We must continue to have well-trained CE coordinators in these jobs.
* Try and define CE more precisely.
* Convince elected officials of why CE is essential.
* Don't give up on principals and teachers.
* Make sure the system doesn't co-opt CE.
* Work harder on lifelong learning.
* Open more school buildings.

The final assortment of challenges which appears in Table 14 was generated from national opinion leader responses.

Table 14

CE Challenges Identified by
National Opinion Leaders

* Principals will still be obstacles.
* Develop solid state funding formulas for CE.
* Maximize the concept.
* Re-focus the CE concept.
* Achieve agreement on what CE is and does.
* CE runs counter to union philosophy--a challenge.
* Capitalize on tough economic times and fill voids.
* CE professionals need a better image and more recognition within school structures.
* Preserve quality training.
* We must protect the integrity of CE because others are using the term.
* Get away from our idealism--at least a bit.
* Enter mainstream of educational activity.
* Help create ties with business and industry.
* NCEA must grow from the minor association it now is.
* Build new alliances to gain support.
* Learn more about politics.

The lengthy lists of CE successes and challenges will be discussed further in the CONCLUSIONS section of this report. Responses to Question 7, the final interview question appear below.

7. WOULD PEOPLE PURSUE CE ACTIVITIES IN COMMUNITIES IF NO FORMAL CE PROGRAM EXISTED?

Another way of posing this question goes like this: Can they get along without us? Many respondents were at first shocked by this question. But across all categories the most frequent responses were like those that follow:

> Needs would be there. People would find programs or make them up themselves.

Yes! Citizens are getting more consumer-oriented.

CE can be done much more cheaply than we now do it--with volunteers.

People are a lot more creative than we realize.

Folks are resourceful. If they want something bad enough, they go after it.

We do a hellava job in CE. But we are expendable.

In general, respondents felt that somehow human needs would get addressed. There were only a couple of responses like the following two:

People want us to do everything for them. They need us.

Nothing would go on in this community if there was no CE program.

A more in-between response focused on some of the strengths of CE.

CE provides the direction necessary in meeting needs.

I think the beauty of CE is the coordination which takes place.

CE is a great organizer of resources.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was designed to examine CE opinion leaders' perceptions of past CE successes and challenges facing community educators in the future. In addition, some secondary questions of interest related to successes and challenges were posed. Three kinds of conclusions have been reached and will be presented at this point. A brief summary concludes this report.

General conclusions

1.) Awareness of CE continues to increase. It was obvious that awareness levels were centered more on the existence of CE as a vehicle for providing services. Very little awareness of CE as a comprehensive concept or philosophy was thought to exist. One message at the local level was repeated continuously:

> This operation is in business to serve people. My staff doesn't have the time to enter any off the wall philosophical debate.

2.) Another promising development is that superintendents in several school systems are looking to CE to help work on school problems. This may indeed be an important link between CE and the school program--broadly speaking. Community educators must look for any available links, not just those that tie into the instructional program.

3.) With respect to acceptance of CE by school people, it appears that in some areas CE is doing more for the schools. In the process, community educators have become involved in "legitimate" school ventures and are seen less as adjunct. It seems that acceptance comes with maturity of the program and survival of key staff:

> It took several years for central office to realize that I was also on their team. Now they play me regularly.

4.) Statistics have hurt us to a certain degree. Community educators have a propensity to quantify everything. One danger inherent in this practice is "the credit game."

> Agencies in this community got into the "who gets the credit fight." We discovered that as many as six agencies claimed credit for various programs and participants.

Question 4 in the study led to the conclusion that there is a lot more CE functioning in the U.S. than is represented in NCEA literature or in Mott reports. Part of the dilemma relates to CE's need to document success, progress, accomplishments. But there were many respondents who were more genuinely interested in sustaining CE activities than in whether they met somebody's criteria for what CE is. CE will continue to grow. Whether or not it is the "right" kind of CE really will not matter to the recipients of the services.

5.) CE will go on even if there is no formal CE program. What needs to be emphasized is the uniqueness of the process. Here is a flexible process which emphasizes creativity and interfaces with existing organizations. Moreover, the potential to cut across institutional barriers has a special appeal:

> I sometimes feel as a coordinator I am in no-man's land. People want to know my agenda. There is none--except getting on with CE.

Conclusions About Past CE Successes

1. CE has indeed come a long way since the Flint program began. It was something that was exportable as an idea. The sheer growth in numbers of community schools was viewed as a significant success.

2. CE was seen by most groups as having gotten school buildings opened, programs offered and people involved. National opinion leaders (mostly center directors) did not mention these basic successes of CE.

3. Center directors emphasized the national network of centers as a success. They were the only group to do so. However, all other groups did mention the availability of training as a CE success. A lot of training in CE does occur regularly. Not all is done by CE centers--exclusively. In fact, state CE associations are becoming more actively involved in training for community educators. One state president observed:

> The CE center staff is out of it. I don't think they are as much in touch as they once were. Times do change and we are flying a little more on our own. We still look to the center as a resource, but not the only one.

4. CE is viewed largely as an operational success. It is not perceived to be a huge success either conceptually or philosophically.

5. Getting to a state legislature and eventually securing CE legislation was viewed as a major breakthrough. It was suggested that successful states be studied extensively for tips on how to duplicate the success.

6. Several national organizations have become aware of and supportive of CE in the past five years. NCEA received positive strokes from many respondents who recognized this effort as valuable.

7. The most widely mentioned success was that CE has managed to get school buildings open and programs functioning. In addition, community residents have been involved in the CE process but with varying levels of effectiveness. Far less success has been observed in interagency cooperation and even less with community development objectives. CE was viewed as having far more potential as a vehicle for service and program delivery.

8. Outreach and communication functions were identified by school people as a CE success. Many CE professionals viewed it as a major breakthrough because their activities legitimize CE.

9. CE has been very successful because it can systematically identify human needs at the local level and plan appropriate responses.

10. CE has produced revenues in numerous school systems. One superintendent remarked:

> It is great to have money left over which can be put to a variety of good uses. That's a new situation.

Conclusions About Future CE Challenges

1. CE will have to become more politically-oriented. Further alliances with educational groups must be forged. In addition, state politics will play a greater role in CE's future success.

2. Community educators should become more business-like in their administrative practices. Cost-effectiveness will be a major factor in the future.

3. To some extent our idealism of the past should be tempered by known successes and the realities of today. Basic CE tenets should be adhered to while outmoded theoretical goals should be re-examined, perhaps discarded.

4. The university-based center network should be evaluated. Much of its work has been valuable and linked to CE's continued growth. But the network ought to look at its own future. How will it continue to meet training needs for example?

5. There must continue to be a drive toward entering the mainstream of the K-12 structure. Coordinators who have built close working relationships with building staffs have watched their programs grow.

Professional educator respondents in this study were giving receptive signals about CE contributions. More efforts in this regard will pay off.

6. Proposition 13 and the recession of 1982 were mentioned as lost opportunities for CE. These vacuums in prosperity offer great opportunities for community educators to help address vital concerns.

7. CE as a field is faced with the need to keep on producing competent professionals to assume leadership positions. As the rewards in human service work decline, this challenge will become greater.

8. Establishing productive ties with local businesses and industry was viewed as a tremendous untapped challenge. School people, too, are attempting to build these ties. Here is another possible linkage between CE and K-12.

9. NCEA was both praised and criticized. The organization has attempted to serve an assortment of member constituencies. This strategy has cost NCEA many members. On the other hand, the same strategy has attracted many new members who have joined because the association does not cater to one group alone. One thing NCEA should listen carefully to was expressed by a frustrated former member:

> Professional growth and renewal are important to all professionals. NCEA is not providing these opportunities. I'm having more luck with our state association.

10. Creativity and flexibility were repeated consistently as characteristic of community educators and of CE. It was suggested that these remain as benchmarks to strive for because harder times are predicted for the world of education.

11. A great deal of frustration was expressed over the mission of CE. Also, the definition of CE still plagues the field. NCEA has developed an agenda for CE. Other such efforts should continue. Reconceptualizing any field, philosophy or practice is healthy. Getting total agreement is impossible.

Summary

This study could easily have grown by including more questions and by adding additional groups of opinion leaders. Its sole purpose was to shed some light on where we have been and what we face.

Lists of past CE successes and future CE challenges were generated by talking to individuals who are recognized as CE opinion leaders. All of us who work in this field have a responsibility to re-trace our steps and to plan carefully for the future.

It was clear that we have achieved a great deal as community educators. But it was just as clear that numerous difficult obstacles lie ahead. School administrators, long seen as non-supportive, are helping CE become positioned more solidly within the educational structure. The challenges which lie ahead were not perceived with gloom; respondents spoke positively about pursuing the challenges. CE is at another plateau. The community educator of tomorrow must build from the successes of yesterday.

REFERENCES

Brady, J. The craft of interviewing. New York: Vintage Books, 1977.

Burbach, H. J. and Decker, L. E. (Eds). Planning and assessment in community education. Midland, MI.: Pendell Publishing, 1977.

Clark, P. A. A definition of community education. NCSEA News, 1971, May.

Clark, P. A. Community education and its major Components. Journal of Teacher Education, 1977, 28, 5-8.

Decker, L. E. Foundations of community education. Midland, MI.: Pendell Publishing, 1972.

Decker, L. E. People helping people. Midland, MI.: Pendell Publishing, 1978.

Hiemstra, R. Lifelong learning. Lincoln, NE.: Professional Educators Publications, Inc., 1976.

Kaplan, M. H. A nine phase approach to community education development. In H. J. Burbach and L. E. Decker (Eds.), Planning and assessment in community education. Midland, MI.: Pendell Publishing Co., 1977.

Kaplan, M. H. An investigation of selected community school terminations (Research Report 82-108). Charlottesville: Mid-Atlantic Center for Community Education, University of Virginia, 1982.

Linden, R., Schwartz, T. A., and Kaplan, M. H. An inquiry into relationships between human service agencies: Danville (VA) (Research Report 81-107). Charlottesville: Bureau of Educational Research and Mid-Atlantic Center for Community Education, University of Virginia, 1981.

Minzey, J. D. and LeTarte, C. E. Community education: From program to process. Midland, MI.: Pendell Publishing, 1972.

Minzey, J. D. and LeTarte, C. E. Community education: From program to process to practice. Midland, MI.: Pendell Publishing Co., 1979.

Rogers, T. F. Interviews by telephone and in person: Quality of responses and field performances. Public Opinion Quarterly, 1976, 40, Spring.

Schwartz, T. A., Kaplan, M. H., Coughlin, A. G., and Stamp, J. A. Evaluation of a human services program: Community education in Kanawha County, W. Va. Charlottesville: Bureau of Educational Research, University of Virginia, 1980.

Schwartz, T. A. and Kaplan, M. H. Doint it with the cube: A new conceptualization of community education. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Los Angeles, April 1981. (EDRS # ED 200 772).

Totten, W. F. The power of community education. Midland, MI.: Pendell Publishing, 1970.

Warden, J. W. Reconceptualizing community education: Expanding our horizons. Anchorage: Unpublished paper available from the author, 1982.

Willower, D. J. and Fraser, H. W. School superintendents on their work. Administrator's Notebook, 1980, January.